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## speak out

*Continued from Page 4*

Perhaps I am missing some subtle irony on Tsien's part, but crediting John Paul II and Reagan with liberating much of the world is wrong. For one brutal example not precisely within the scope of your publication, just take a look at Latin America. The liberation theology movements there were helping the people take the words of Jesus not just as matters of meditation, but as guides for actions that would help create a more just society. Latin Americans began having crazy ideas like believing that they should own the resources under their feet and that they should be the ones making the decisions that affect their lives.

This was unacceptable, and Reagan effectively declared war on the Catholic Church in Latin America. For example, in Guatemala and El Salvador, tens of thousands of people were tortured and murdered by brutal military regimes and paramilitaries funded and supported by the United States. What was John Paul II's response? He told the Salvadoran and Guatemalan people to sit down and shut up. They did not, and the Reagan administration kept funding the bloody violence.

To be fair, the crimes of Reagan far exceeded those of John Paul II, and if the Nuremberg Laws had any meaning beyond the Nazis, Reagan would have been hanged. Much like Stalin, Reagan is proclaimed by his blind loyalists as someone who only wanted peace, and damn the historical record. Like Gandhi's depiction of Stalin, in Latin America and elsewhere Reagan was willing to wade through other peoples' blood to get there. Lapdogs like Tsien gladly wallow in ignorance, licking the blood from his boots.

PETER SHAW  
Portland

### The right thing to do

TO THE EDITOR:

The object of establishing civil unions is simply (1) to provide a way to carry out the meaning and intent of Oregon Constitution Article 1, Section 20 (requires privileges and immunities be granted to all Oregonians on the same terms) and (2) to allow the state to regulate these human relationships just as it regulates other human relationships (e.g., shareholder relations with their corporations, business partner relationships and, of course, marital relationships). No matter what the label is, the intent is to grant the same privileges and benefits to all Oregonians on the same terms as required by Article 1, Section 20.

The term "marriage" is not legally or philosophically the same as the label "civil union" simply because marriage carries not only a civil sense but an inherent religious sense. Claims made by proponents of Measure 36 that civil unions are identical to marriage do not seem to understand the religious aspect of marriage. The mere fact that SB 1000 grants identical privileges and benefits for both marriage spouses and civil union partners does not mean that the two institutions are identical; it only means that the Legislature is adhering to Article 1, Section 20.

Marriage is, I believe, the mystical and God-ordained union of a man and a woman in holy matrimony. I'm a born-again Christian, and while some may scoff at the notion of "holy matrimony," I do not. Marriage is a sacred institution, and that's that. The fact that the state surrounds that institution with a civil scaffold, so to speak, cannot and does not distract from that.

There are three important reasons why for hundreds of years now English and American common law has asserted a vital state interest in civil marriage. I will go into these and show why the same state interest applies to participants in

a civil union or domestic partnership.

Contrasting marriage with civil unions, the latter are obviously and distinctly not religious in nature. No one I know of will or can assert that there is a religious connotation. As I noted earlier, the institution to be known as a civil union or a domestic partnership is merely a civil scaffold for the implementation of Article 1, Section 20. An Oregon appellate court has already applied Article 1, Section 20 in a case that granted certain benefits of an Oregon Health Sciences University nurse to her domestic partner. And, of course, Connecticut's Republican governor has just signed a civil union bill granting the same kinds of benefits that SB 1000 grants. What is good enough for Connecticut is good enough for Oregon.

All human relationships require an umpire. Not only do sporting events require umpires, but also business relationships of all kinds (shareholder/corporate, business partnerships and the civil aspects of marriage). There are laws and rules in all of these relationships, and the courts provide the umpires. These are privileges and benefits of the kind that Article 1, Section 20 requires to be applied to all Oregonians on the same terms.

All members of the Oregon legislative assembly are sworn to uphold the Oregon Constitution, including Article 1, Section 20. Thus, it is not only proper but also the right thing to do for Oregon legislators to vote for SB 1000.

LEE COLEMAN  
Aloha

### Send your marriage money to BRO

TO THE EDITOR:

We would like to suggest to all the other couples who got married last March and April and received a refund check for your marriage license to sign it over to Basic Rights Oregon and send it to them. Wouldn't it be great if they got the \$180,000!

DAN ZEHREN  
BILL COULOMBE  
Portland

### Bolster Basic Rights Oregon

TO THE EDITOR:

Last week my wife and I received our \$60 refund check from Multnomah County for our marriage license. Immediately we wrote a check to Basic Rights Oregon in that amount to help bolster its efforts on the issue of equality for the queer community.

Whether or not you believe in its strategies to attain this goal, I urge anyone who received the refund to send it directly to BRO. It is fighting the fight for all of us.

REBECCA LEVISON  
Portland

### Critique or tirade?

TO THE EDITOR:

Reading the article "Is Love Makes a Family Still Effective?" disappointed me [May 6]. Was it really an article about Love Makes a Family being effective or a diatribe against Bonnie Tinker?

I think Tinker is asking some good questions that need to be answered by Basic Rights Oregon and other leaders in the lesbian/gay/transgender community. I think the real reason that Tinker is being attacked is because her views are