

The Thought Connection

Move, Cat, Move!

by Christine Burton

Year after year lesbians and gay men long for legal protection for our civil rights. Some work for it to the point of burnout. Too many leave it for the burnouts to accomplish. The results obtained are not in proportion to the efforts made. Are we too little and/or too late? Do we value freedom less than the homophobe values her/his control?

Oppressors work around the clock to get where they are. Controllers leave no stone unturned to get control and to keep it. Yet, freedom lovers tend to accept control and oppression as a fact of life, although sometimes they wish it were different. As small children, limited by the necessary parental protection, we became accustomed to not being free; we accept adult control too easily. It is a mark of maturity to realize that freedom is earned, constantly guarded and defended or you don't have it.

Lesbians and gay men would do well to consider the current situation between anti-abortionists and those who want reproductive freedom for women. Having had access to legal abortions for sixteen years, women ignored the rash of criminal attacks on abortion clinics. Only now are women beginning to feel a little uncomfortable by months and months of Fundamentalist rhetoric that says the zygote is a human being, also the shouts in the streets, "you're murdering your babies." How could women have waited so long while the con-

querors were developing public sympathy and political power!

A zygote is not a baby. A zygote is the cell produced by the union of the egg and the sperm. A zygote is the equivalent of a seed of human life. If we accept that a zygote is a human being with more human rights than we lesbians and gay men are permitted, then let's put oil and vinegar on tomato seeds, lettuce seeds, cucumber seeds, onion seeds, and call it a salad. If a zygote or an embryo are babies, we'll have to invent a new word for the newborn.

Why didn't women balance the Fundamentalist lies with truth. Perhaps a rose by any other name would smell as sweet, but a zygote is not a baby. Now in Canada they're lowering the national flag over schools in memory of "all the murdered fetuses." It is unbelievable that the multitudes across our continent have been sucked into such ignorant propaganda.

It might empower us lesbians and gay men to understand where all this comes from. The anti-abortion movement is a contemporary manifestation of the same male territorial instinct that surfaced in history about the time the bible was written (5000 years ago). Men must have expected eternal victory over women when they wrote god's punishment on Eve, "your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." (Genesis 3:16) Then as now, men armed their territorial attacks on women with the voice of god.

And today it is church leaders who

empower the struggle for control over women's bodies. Street demonstrations are led by protestant ministers. The pope condemns divorce, contraceptive practices, feminism, and homosexuality. In words, clergymen would like to make it impossible for a woman to get out of a bad marriage, or to avoid a pregnancy, or to discover her mind -- and don't let her seek comfort in the arms of another woman. All of it, catholic or protestant, is an ecclesiastical way of saying: Get control of women and rule over them.

The same clergymen use their god and their bible to uphold oppression for the homosexual. They champion the family because it is the biological source of more church supporters. At the same time they turn their attention away from crimes against the family that are committed by family members, and blame homosexuals for the deterioration of the family. If the anti-abortionists win their cause, ecclesiastics will go back to preaching hatred for lesbians and gay men with the same violent rhetoric that was developed so effectively by Jerry Falwell. Is it possible that women, lesbians and gays still support churches with their attendance and money? Are you giving ammunition to your enemy?

We've watched the anti-abortionist movement grow, almost unresisted until recently. We've observed their relentless drive that does not falter before their goal is achieved. Women, lesbians and gays, without obscuring the truth as they do, could learn from them the techniques of developing power.

Humans share the nature of the cat that does not move until it is uncomfortable where it is. Isn't our oppression uncomfortable enough? Or must we wait for a Hitler or Khomeini to slaughter us for being lesbians and gay men? Must we face death before we are willing to fight for life?

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