

## Out in the Mountains

established in 1986

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## To Submit Articles and Letters

We encourage and implore our readers to do what they can to make *OITM* a paper both for and by gay, lesbian, and bisexual Vermonters. Please assist us by typing your articles and letters double-spaced and including your name and phone number in case we have any questions. Your submission should be received by *OITM* no later than the 1st of the previous month. *Thank you* for helping out!

## How to Advertise

If you would like to run an ad in *OITM*, please contact us for rates, sizes, and information. Ad copy must be received by the 1st of the month to be included in the next month's issue. Copy can be mailed to: *OITM*, P.O. Box 177, Burlington, VT 05402, or call Ellen at (802) 860-1922.

# Editorial

## Foot Soldiers of the Lord Wage War on Civil Rights

Cleland E. Selby

President Clinton has acknowledged that violence is "tearing the heart out of our country". What he failed to acknowledge is that a lot of the violence is generated by the clergy of the Christian Right.

Since the early 1970's, the Christian Right, through its "foot soldiers of the Lord", has launched a political war against persons of color, feminists, Jews and other religious minorities, and gay people. Their goal is to merge church and state by dividing and conquering and in so doing eliminating human rights and individual freedoms. Women, non-white people, people who are not Christian fundamentalists or Roman Catholics, and gays are threatening the power of white Christian males who take their authority from selected Biblical literature. Framed in the rhetoric of morality, of good versus evil, these Christian fundamentalists are our major threat to democracy. Shakespeare in *Macbeth* states the reality very clearly; "Fair is foul, and foul is fair." Under the banner of "good", these so-called Christians have created "armies of God" united by their racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, and homophobia.

Their rhetoric, like that of President's Reagan and Bush, is about establishing the "values" of the 1940's and 1950's when white males dominated, when segregation was legal, when women held little political, social, religious, or personal power, when gay people were invisible, and when their so-called "traditional family values" were actually for far too many persons a time when battering, rape, and alcoholism were horrible family secrets.

They paint a picture that seems "fair" but which is very "foul." To increase the size of their army, ironically the Christian Right is attempting to recruit African-Americans. One example of how subtle and sinister their weaponry has been is evidenced in the Traditional Values Coalition's videotape entitled *Gay Rights, Special Rights*. The intent of the tape is to confuse people about the real meaning of civil rights and to do so through the voices of African-American people.

The right to obtain a job is not a "special right." It is a civil right. Access to housing is not a "special right". It is a civil right. The right to have and raise children is not a "special right". It is a civil right. The right to be protected from violent acts is not a "special right". It is a civil right. African-Americans, other non-whites, women, several religious minorities, and gay people have fought for and continue to fight for exactly the same rights that white heterosexual males have always had. Extending civil rights to all persons does not withdraw those same civil rights from others who have already secured them. The very core of our democracy is built upon the principle that "All people are created equal." if so, then all people are entitled to equal protection.

On the eve of his inauguration President Clinton said this: "Let us build an American home for the twenty-first century where everyone has a place at the table." Lesbians and gay men must continue to wage our own war, a thoughtful and caring one, to assure that we too will have that place. ▼

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