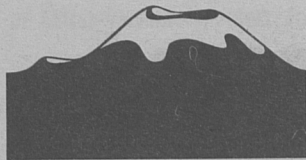


opinion

VOICES FROM THE MOUNTAINS
by Lyle Glazier



Judge Not

The Rutland *Herald*, on May 6, 2000, printed a remarkable letter to the editor from Elisa Winter with the title "Better to refrain from judgment." Although I'm an agnostic and Mrs. Winter a Christian, her last two paragraphs are so remarkable that I dialed for her phone number in Vergennes and left on her answering machine my grateful congratulations. Here are her paragraphs:

"If you think that gay folks are evil or sick or unnatural, I think you're wrong, but you can believe whatever you want. But while you're busy judging and despising and condemning, please try to remember once in a while that judging and despising and condemning are exactly the things the stone-throwers were doing. And Jesus asked the stone-throwers simply to look into their own hearts and see which one of them was

completely without sin. Then and only then could a stone be thrown.

"Are you all so sure that

I am disturbed by what could be false piety now that gays and lesbians have been granted rights of civil union.

you are so perfectly spiritually evolved that you should be usurping God's judgment and throwing stones at the humans he loves and forgives just as much as he loves and forgives you?"

When I got her answering service and realized I could not talk in person to her, I left a message thanking her. I told her that I had a remarkable Sunday school teacher when I

was a child and was especially moved to discover in her letter not only the profound love and forgiveness that is

the heart of the New Testament, but that even in the Old Testament, her point is made. (The story of Job, for example, is the story of a man who became tested by God to find out if he was truly without pride and never rebelled against the will of his Maker.)

As I hung up the phone feeling clean and refreshed by even this indirect communication with Mrs. Winter, I had

in front of me my clipped copy of her letter. Without thinking I printed across the top of it "Judge not that ye be not judged."

Where had the words come from? I was repeating them from somewhere deep in my past. I came down stairs and took from a shelf three sourcebooks: *Roget's Thesaurus*, a two-volume *Everyman's Library Dictionary of Quotations* and the *Crown Thesaurus of Quotations*. No help there. Without hope, I turned to the 1941 *Merriam Webster Unabridged Dictionary*, and there, under the word judge, was what I was looking for in exactly the words I had written across the top of Mrs. Winter's letter: "Judge not that ye be not judged. Matthew 7.1"

I went to the shelves and found my well-thumbed Holy Bible. Written on a blank

page before the title page was this dedication: "From Mrs. C. K. Gilbert and the Sunday School." There was no date, but I had been no more than nine years old – 80 years ago.

What a remarkable pair of books – the King James Bible and Noah Webster's dictionary. And what a remarkable thing the computer stored in our brain! Years ago, I learned from an article in the *Brown University Alumnus* how a pathologist and a psychologist working together discovered the secret of memory – that in the brain are tiny wires or filaments and on those wires are bumps or follicles, infinitesimally small, recording experiences. I wrote to the scientists suggesting that they get in touch with a poet who benefits from Wordsworth's definition of poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of

CONTINUED ON PG 14

- 1978** — GLAD founded in response to sting operation at the Boston Public Library
- 1980** — GLAD brief helps Mass. high court rule that custody of children cannot be denied because of a parent's sexual orientation
- 1984** — GLAD creates the AIDS Law Project to protect legal rights of people with HIV
- 1986** — GLAD wins one of the first honorable discharges for a US servicemember targeted for being gay or lesbian
- 1992** — GLAD co-authors first domestic partner ordinance in Massachusetts
- 1995** — GLAD sues Merrimack, NH school district over anti-gay censorship policy
- 1995** — GLAD appears in US Supreme Court for glb Irish group seeking to march in St. Patrick's Day Parade in Boston
- 1998** — GLAD appears again in US Supreme Court arguing that people with HIV are protected from discrimination
- 1999** — GLAD wins equal treatment from school administrators for high school Gay/Straight Alliances in Rhode Island and New Hampshire.
- 1999** — GLAD wins a decision in Mass. ruling that non-biological "de facto" parents are entitled to seek visitation with the children they have raised.
- 1999** — GLAD wins a ruling in Vermont that gay and lesbian couples are entitled to the full range of benefits that come with civil marriage.

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Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD) has worked for over 21 years on behalf of gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, transgendered individuals and people with HIV in the six states of New England. Whether the issue is employment discrimination, denial of health care, the right of glbt students to get an education in safety, fair treatment for glbt parents, the recognition of families of same-sex couples or housing discrimination, GLAD is your resource.

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