

'Gays are civilized people'

Although I am a member of both the Gay Student Union and Student Council, I make the following comments as an individual. While I find much to take issue with in Mark Ward's column (Oct. 10), I recognize that many others feel the same way he does but do not speak out, and thus he is performing a vital service.

In particular, since those of us who do not hate gays find it difficult to conceive of the hatefulness of others, it is useful to have such a concrete example. I do not hate Ward, only his hatefulness.

The most offensive theme is that gay activists push amorality. To me, it is exactly the reverse. I am shocked by the immorality of current attitudes and behavior toward gays. Is it moral to make gays scapegoat for a supposed onslaught of selfish hedonism, as Ward does?

Is it moral to suggest as he does that unless gays are forceably tortured and/ or persecuted (in the thinly disguised form of "treatment"), our civilization will be destroyed? Is it moral to offer conversion or cure when it has never been shown to lead to anything except more self-hatred? Is it moral to tell lies about the capabilities of any group of human beings, to make of them subhumans who we spiritually cannibalize; whose persecution enhances our personal self-esteem and status?

Is it moral to persecute gays, and then when some of them, understandably, crack up, blame it on gays as a class? Is it not immoral not to deal with people as individuals, rather than according to the presumed negative characteristics of some group to which they belong?

Every paragraph of Ward's column substantiates the fact that

Guest Column

by Jim Hoehn

in persecuting those who do not conform to his strict, legalistic behavioral prescriptions, anything goes. I venture to say that most people have gone past his mechanistic conception of sexual ethics and have more of the New Testament norm— love, mutual growth and fulfillment.

Most people who have had any satisfactory sexual relationship realize that the procreative framework is not necessary to prevent a lapse into pure hedonistic selfishness, since the norms of love and growth are the most experientially valid norms, and the most fulfilling.

Ward would see to it that gays do not receive anything for the contributions they make in taxes and student activity fees, if I understand his arguments against GSU office space. He is, indeed, so intolerant of gays that he will not grant the majority of students the right to be concerned about gay problems, if I understand his arguments against Gay Affairs.

Particularly amusing is his claim that sodomy laws are needed to protect property values. In fact, white collar gays have been a major part of the current renovation of our central cities, and always raise property values. Ward's argument is reminiscent of arguments for "Jim Crow" laws based on fears of property value declines.

As for crime, why did the District of Columbia chief of police recently say he was glad his daughter went to the safe gay bars rather than the crime-ridden non-gay ones, where the police had

much trouble? Gays are civilized, honest, responsible people, not steps toward animals as Ward suggest.

Unlike Ward, gay activists emphasize basic human acceptance and mutual understanding, not statistics or hypersophisticated theories.

Ward ends by suggesting gays will never get it together until they deny their orientation. Allow me to quote Dr. Franklin Kameny: "If the disadvantages, disabilities, and penalties which the homosexual faces are a result of society's prejudices— and of course they are, in their entirety— then suggesting that the homosexual improve his lot by submission to those prejudices, at cost of his personal integrity, is fundamentally immoral.

One does not propose to solve the problems of anti-Semitism by conversion to Christianity, much as that might improve the life of many individual Jews. The homosexual has a right to remain a homosexual, and in fact a moral obligation to do so, in order to resist immoral prejudice and discrimination."

What makes gay activists tick? The hope that they can contribute to an alleviation of coldness and fragmentation among people, to create a better sense of community, to emphasize acceptance and understanding rather than cruelty and hatred. Yes, Mark Ward, gay activists are deeply concerned with the moral issues involved. The homophobic attitudes you hold, and others who agree with you, are the disease, not the cure.

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CD Thursday, October 20, 1977