

"Writing the truth  
as I see it;  
trying not to  
offend  
those who will  
disagree."

# The truth as I see it™

Idaho Common Sense™



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## Human beings all

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Last week I wrote an article on homosexuality. To suggest this is a volatile subject is a gross understatement. The number of responses, the intensity of those responses, and the speed of those responses was overwhelming. This could mean the topic should be off limits, it could mean dissenting opinions should not be printed, or it could mean this topic is so important, so volatile, so emotionally charged that more discussion is needed rather than less. I would suggest making any topic off-limits is inappropriate. I would further suggest deciding which opinions can and cannot be advanced is equally inappropriate. Finally, I would suggest these responses indicate this subject needs much more public discussion and debate.

To those who found my statements demeaning and hurtful, I am sorry. My intentions were to open up a very difficult subject while offering my personal views. I did not take into account the reasons for the animosity and tremendous emotions associated with this topic. Following emails, coffees, and lunches, I now have a better understanding of the source of some of those feelings. One person reminded me of the Kansas pastor who espouses, "God hates fags." I recalled Matthew Shepard, the university student from Laramie, Wyoming. They found his bloody, battered body tied to a wooden fence outside Laramie, beaten with the butt of a pistol, and left to die in near-freezing temperatures. Can I reasonably expect calm, objective reactions to a topic that has endangered lives and seen people murdered, murdered simply because of their sexual orientation? The issue is not as clear and calm as it appears

viewed from my own safe world. I have not lived with fear, threats, intimidation, and discrimination.

In the past this issue has caused so much hurt, it is understandable to perceive any opposing view as an insult, an attack, a threat. While attempting to gain a better understanding of people's feelings on this issue, several people explained the substantial emotions surrounding it. One of the statements I received expressed the emotions well, saying, "The 'God Hates Fags' preacher from Kansas is alive and well in the United States. For me this is a very real threat."

Another person gave me an article dated March 6, 2008 outlining the life-threatening situation of a man from Iran who is homosexual and was living in England. England was going to deport him to Iran knowing if they did, Iranian authorities would execute him. He fled to The Netherlands and is now awaiting a legal determination if The Netherlands will allow him sanctuary. If they deny his request for sanctuary, they will return him to England and ultimately, Iran, where he will be executed.

Must someone risk his or her life for their beliefs? Can we have opinions and beliefs others find unacceptable while living peacefully together? Is this not one of the great blessings of our country?

Is our society, our own community able to sustain disagreement without hate? Is it possible to learn to disagree without hate or without fear of retaliation? I received an email from a man who considered bringing a business to Pocatello but did not relocate here because his son was homosexual and he feared for his son's safety. If we

make people fearful of our community, are we not demonstrating exactly the opposite of what we claim to be? Should we tolerate law-abiding citizens feeling unsafe in our community?

Although I do not agree with many of the claims and assertions of the past week, I now have a better appreciation of their origins and a better understanding of the history leading to those views. Can people disagree without claiming one or the other is intolerant? Is there a way to state disagreement respectfully? Can reasonable people disagree without offering negative descriptions of each other's character?

I received two emails prior to submitting this article, one directly to me, the other via a friend. One individual offered this observation, "Defending our basic values and still acting as God loving Christians towards those who would change (those values) is real hard." Following some dialogue, the man who feared for his son's safety if he moved to Pocatello, offered this comment, "for the opportunity for reconciliation and healing with Dr. Bosley, I thank you." Do their sentiments offer insight on how we might better deal with those who have differing opinions?

Perhaps the quote of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "I have seen great intolerance shown in support of tolerance" should be expanded to, "I have seen great intolerance shown in support of tolerance from some who have themselves faced great intolerance." We can all do better.