

OPINION

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Sun-Tribune

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Enclaves not answer

Re: *Immigration Boom to continue*, Jan. 25.

I am afraid to voice my opinion as political correctness has gone too far in Markham, but after reading what Ratna Omidvar, executive director of the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council, had to say at an "inclusivity summit" in York Region, I must respond.

Inclusivity is word being thrown around a lot these days but, unfortunately, it's being used in the wrong way.

What we have in Markham are "enclaves"; areas where huge sections of a particular ethnic group settle.

This is neither diversity, nor inclusive.

Ms Omidvar jokes she should live in Markham because she is five feet tall, making reference to the fact a bank lowered its counter to "accommodate the typically lower height of its customers".

She is making the all too common arrogant assumption people who already live here don't matter and the new people moving in are to be catered to exclusively.

Has she considered at all the people who already live here?

Will anyone speak out without being afraid of being labeled a racist?

If one comes to a new country and either doesn't speak the language of the

host country or forces traditions to change, is that not intolerant of the people already here?

DAVID ROUT-
MARKHAM

UNICEF in demand

During these troubled times, the United Nations Children's Fund has been called upon more than ever to help countless children in war-ravaged countries.

The tsunami disaster makes it even more evident the relief efforts by UNICEF are in demand.

The less fortunate children of the world are better cared for because of the sale of UNICEF Christmas cards and gifts by local volunteers.

Sincere thanks are extended to the many volunteers who staffed the kiosk at Markville Shopping Centre.

They included members from the St. Andrew's United Church, Grace Anglican Church, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, local high school students and friends of UNICEF.

Many children around the world are able to survive because of their support.

To the many people who made purchases or gave donations, we say a special thank you.

Markham, once again, has extended its hand of support to those children desperately in need of our help.

J. STOREY
MARKHAM



Same-sex marriage Ottawa's convenient distraction

Same-sex marriage?

Most married people have been having the same sex for years.

Marriage is a wonderful institution and some gays are desperate to be in an institution, too.

As you may have heard, the most pressing issue facing Canada is gay weddings. It's top of the agenda for our Parliament, after a six-week holiday.

The federal government this week introduced a bill to legalize marriage between two people of the same sex. The debate makes for great spectator sport, in that both the governing Liberals and opposing Conservatives are divided internally — and locally.

MOST TORIES OPPOSED

While most Tories are opposed to same-sex marriage, Newmarket-Aurora MP Belinda Stronach is in favour. And while most Grits are in favour, Richmond Hill MP Bryon Wilfert is opposed.

Prime Minister Paul Martin says Liberals don't have to support the bill, unless they're in the cabinet. Or would like to be in the cabinet someday. Or would like their nomina-



Bruce Annan

tion papers signed in the next election, which he'll call if the bill is defeated...

The sweet irony is some of the stiffest opposition to gay marriage is among recent immigrants — the franchise Liberals so effectively courted for so long.

When I was young, homosexuality was The Love That Dare Not Speak Its Name. Now it's The Love That Won't Shut the Hell Up.

For months, mainstream media gleefully ran pictures of men kissing each other, as successive provinces allowed gay marriage.

Some Canadian opposition to same-sex marriage is simply a backlash. As in,

"Enough already, we know some people are gay and we're glad you have equal rights now. But quit rubbing our nose in your lifestyle, thanks."

Awhile ago, I asked a gay friend if she and her partner of two decades planned to wed, now that it is legal in Ontario.

"We have both our names on mortgage and other documents," she said. "We don't need another piece of paper to show we're committed."

But the radical few will never be satisfied. They're motivated not by love of equality, but by hatred of the majority and its traditions.

This is why religious groups are skeptical of government assurances they won't be forced to conduct gay weddings. That may be true until the first "human rights" challenge ends up before our leftist Supreme Court.

There was a simple and elegant solution proposed more than a half-century ago, when our society started down the real "slippery slope" of marriage disintegration — no-fault divorce, common-law relationships, out-of-wedlock children.

Get the state out of the marriage business entirely. Let city hall issue civil union docu-

ments. Allow only religions to conduct weddings, according to their individual, respective rules.

That's what the great British essayist C.S. Lewis proposed in his book *Mere Christianity*. "There ought to be two distinct kinds of marriage," he wrote. "One governed by the State with rules enforced on all citizens, the other governed by the Church with rules enforced by her on her own members."

DON'T HOLD BREATH

Don't hold your breath waiting for government to concede control.

It's in the interests of the politicians to fill front pages with same-sex marriage to distract us from more important issues.

Indeed, a cynic might suggest Mr. Martin would be happy to call an election over "defending human rights" and campaign against those Western religious bigot conservatives before the Gomery inquiry identifies more lying, stealing Liberals.

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LETTERS POLICY

The Sun-Tribune welcomes your letters. Submissions must be less than 400 words and include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The Sun-Tribune reserves the right to publish or not publish and edit for clarity and space.

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