

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Opinion | I Participated In The St. Croix Pride Parade In Support Of My Youngest Child

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My youngest child, Lex, identifies as “non-binary.” This means Lex does not conform to the stereotypes of masculine or feminine, but is somewhere in between. There are words for this in the LGBTQ community; gender fluid, or pangender or other-gendered. More people are discovering that the traditional pigeonhole boxes of boy, and girl do not fit their inner sense of self.

In support of Lex’s quest for identity, we made a pilgrimage to Frederiksted along with their elder sister Grace to participate in the Pride March. (Lex prefers the pronouns, they, their, them since they are gender-neutral)

What we found in Frederiksted among the people in the March was overwhelming positive support for people pursuing their own identity. The LGBTQ marchers expressed virtues like; compassion, acceptance, caring, support, fellowship, love, inclusion, and devotion.

In Aldus Huxley's famous book, "The Perennial Philosophy" he draws on religious literature from all over the world to demonstrate with familiar quotes from holy books the universality of love, compassion, and acceptance. Every philosophy and religion speaks to these values.

Some 300 people marched in Frederiksted from the clock tower to the Sandcastle Hotel peacefully supporting each other and your right to be yourself. Not a harsh word was said. No statements of anger. No statements judging others. And among the marchers, not a single word regarding sex and not a hint of violence.

The March encountered opposition protesters. At three different sites along the route there were people professing opposite messages. Some silently stood with signs containing biblical verses picked to indicate opposition to some forms of interpersonal love. While the marchers had not a word about sex, the opposition protesters seemed obsessed with it. "No ungodly behavior" said one sign as if everyone in the march was engaged in violations of godly laws. Among a few, the words shouted were unprintable, and offered vehemence and hate. The marchers professed love and compassion the opposition protesters did not.

Among the opposition protester's signs, were statements that seem to make no sense. "You are Confused. God makes no mistakes, fix yourself." Did the writer of this sign recognized it's an oxymoron? If God makes no mistakes, and I am the way that I am, then I don't need to be fixed. Or: If there is something wrong with me the way I am, then God has made a mistake.

Among the marchers there was love, acceptance and compassion. Among the protesters there was vehemence and hate.

It seems odd in a community that is so welcoming to people of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and a community where so many people are descendants of former slaves who demanded and won their freedom that there are some who profess to be adherents to a loving God could find so much hate in their hearts.

Jesus taught love and compassion. Jesus sat with tax collectors and sinners. He didn't shun them or profess hate. The Pauline church grew because it welcomed people that other religions shunned; widows, orphans, outcasts, and sinners were welcome in the early Christian church. Where does Jesus teach people to hate?

Which group stood up for Christian, nay, universal values? I'm with the marchers and proud of it.

Finally, a note of praise for the St. Croix Police Department. Officers were out in force. They escorted the parade, they lined the sidewalks and they buffered the marchers from the opposition protesters. The police were exceedingly professional and performed the role admirably. My highest praise to the officers of the St. Croix Police Department.

***Submitted on Tuesday by: Dr. Alexander Randall 5th, Professor of Communication,
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