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Year End 2009

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So here we come to the end of another year - and what a year this was! Over this past year a great many things have happened around the world as well as in South Africa.

We have seen the South African General Elections in April - and we have seen, for various reasons, both cause for concern - and hope for the future. Over this past year, with all the threats against our civil rights both in South Africa and around the world, we have seen a renewed interest in the affairs which affect us - namely politics and religion. It goes without saying that apathy is a deadly trap which we must be careful not to fall into. Over the past two years since I first started getting involved in activism I have seen steady increase in awareness and participation, and have been trying very hard to encourage GLBTIQ participation.

"*Get involved*" I have been telling you, "*Get off your ass - before somebody who hates you kicks it.* " It is very encouraging to me to see that some people finally seem to be *getting* it.

More people seem to be either paying attention to current events, or getting involved by supporting pink groups than before. Perhaps I am being blunt by saying that life is not just all about parties and the cliquey society we live in - if we like freedom and equality, we will have to work to preserve it as well.

Our rights are not safe just because they are written down on a piece of paper called "*the Constitution* ". Our rights are not safe, if people are conspiring to remove those rights from that piece of paper and if the people whose rights are threatened couldn't be bothered to stand up and prevent it. Our rights are not safe if we are indifferent or apathetic. Apathy = death. Case in point, Uganda. Our rights are not safe.

Our Constitutional equality in South Africa is not perfect, but it is unique and stands above all others on Earth today in terms of granting civil equality to the pink community. Sad to say, if you don't appreciate something, you will lose it. Start appreciating it - and if need be, defend it.

Internationally, the situation in Uganda has exposed something I and others have been warning against for years now - the clandestine involvement of the US religious right in Africa, and the poisonous infusion of religious conservatism and so-called " *ex-gay* " propaganda into local politics. For the US religious right and the Republican Party and the Bush administration, Uganda has long been the knob on the end of their staff - availing them of a modicum of credibility when they claimed facetious religious-based " *abstinence only* " sex-education actually works to combat the spread of HIV infection. Uganda has in effect now also become their undoing as well. Suddenly all those conservative political and religious figures are furiously back-pedaling, distancing themselves from their direct involvement in Ugandan affairs in a manner which reminds me of a desperate criminal in search of an alibi. Too late.

Uganda has been described as something of a "*proving ground*" or "*social experiment*" of the US religious right, and for good reason. Top level religious figures in the American conservative evangelical arena have been revealed as being implicated in inciting hatred against gay people for years - and now, the result: The pending genocide in Uganda - should their vaunted Bill be passed - will stain their hands with pink blood. They are in it to the hilt. As it is now, it has revealed conclusively that their strategies and tactics and their plans to create a "*perfect*" African society sans the "*blight*" of natural sexual and gender diversity, as a blueprint for the rest of the world - will irrevocably result in THIS. It has also forever destroyed whatever credibility the "*ex-gay*" fallacy still had left.

What does Uganda have to do with us in South Africa? For one thing it has served to confirm beyond any doubt that our "*human-rights oriented*" government in South Africa has yet again failed to react to calls by human rights groups to condemn human rights violations in Africa - specifically against the pink community. Once again I have the pleasure of referring to their refusal to sign the UN Declaration to Decriminalize Homosexuality in December 2008 - on the basis of "*having principles*" as their feeble and yet revealing excuse. If they disagreed with what has been happening in Uganda, would they not stand up and say so? If they had any honor they would.

2009 is at an end, 2010 is looming ahead. Whether you are straight or not, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex or unsure, if you take an interest in your human rights, because I assure you - if you are human, tampering with human rights affects everyone. Let 2010 be the year we all stand up for our human rights and give those who wish to tamper with them a firm clear message - ***DON'T!***

and support these community-focused websites and who helped me to get my human rights message out there this past year. You are the communications backbone in the fight for our human rights.

I wish you all a very happy and prosperous new year.

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(Posted at Sour Grapes) [10]

anti-gay hate religious fundamentalism Uganda

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