

# **The BLACK C o M M e n t a t o r**

An independent weekly internet magazine  
dedicated to the movement for economic justice,  
social justice and peace - Providing commentary,  
analysis and investigations on issues affecting  
African Americans and the African world.

[www.BlackCommentator.com](http://www.BlackCommentator.com)

[Contents of Issue](#)

[Click here](#)

**October 8, 2009 - Issue 345**

[Home](#)

## **Out of my Black Church, Into the Streets Inclusion**

**By The Reverend Irene Monroe**  
**BlackCommentator.com Editorial Board**

Click on the back button of your browser to return to non printer friendly page of this article

[Click here](#) to get helpful hints for viewing and printing this printer friendly plain text page

I will not be in church this Sunday, but I will be in a place where my spiritual self will be fed. I will be participating in the National Equality March (NEM) this Sunday, carrying the banner of Faith in America, an organization that is working to stop bigotry disguised as religious truth.

And no faith community knows better than the Black Church how religion-based bigotry shapes prejudicial attitudes in this country. Religious texts have been interpreted to justify some of this country's worst crimes against our community, including slavery, lynching, and the prohibition of interracial marriage. As African Americans, we have continually experienced the harm that religion-based bigotry can cause, but today thousands of our own children live on the streets because they have been kicked out of their homes and their church for being lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.

Religion-based bigotry and prejudice are the biggest obstacles lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer Americans face in obtaining full civil equality and equal treatment under the law. As an African American ordained Christian minister and theologian who is also a lesbian, I face religion-based bigotry and prejudice from within my own faith community – the Black Church – and feel it is time to end the harm to our African American LGBTQ youth.

Virginia's "Racial Integrity Act of 1924" was upheld with the opinion, "Almighty God created the races white, black, yellow, malay and red, and He placed them on separate continents. And but for the interference with His arrangement, there would be no cause for such marriages. The fact that He separated the races shows that he did not intend for the races to mix." There is no clearer example of religion-based bigotry to justify discrimination under law, and it took the landmark Supreme Court decision in that case – Loving vs. Virginia – to strike down anti-miscegenation laws in this country.

Sadly, many black ministers today, some of whom even marched with Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., in the 1960's, use religion-based bigotry to accuse our gay rights movement of "pimping" the black civil rights movement. Such attitudes have resulted in the oppression of our African-American LGBTQ community

Civil rights battles in this country have narrowly been understood, reported on or advocated for within the context of African American struggles against both individual and systematic racism. Consequently, the fight to gain equal civil rights by women, gays and lesbians, Native Americans, and other minorities have been eclipsed, ignored and even trivialized. For example, in the 1970s, women's civil rights were pitted against African American civil rights, which often forced African American women to choose which was a greater oppression for them: being black or being female.

Today, a similar debate is occurring within the Black Church and gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities that once again leaves out a population of people who have the most to lose if queer civil rights are ignored - LGBTQ people of African descent.

Because of religion-based bigotry spewing from the pulpits of many black churches, we have a crisis in the African American community: an epidemic of homelessness among LGBTQ youth. They are the black community's throw-away kids, and they need our help. Our community is ravaged by AIDS and HIV largely because religion-based bigotry has kept us from addressing the problem, and now our prejudice is also putting our children on the streets. Their sexual orientation or gender expression does not make our LGBTQ youth children of a lesser God, and they deserve better than to be made homeless.

Discussing this reality publicly might be viewed by many in the black community as "airing our dirty laundry" or "putting our business in the street." But the problem is already in the street – because that's where our LGBTQ kids are. More than 42 percent of the country's homeless youth identify as LGBTQ, and approximately 90 percent of that group is African American and Latino youth from urban enclaves like New York City, Boston, and Los Angeles. After teaching them that the Black Church is their family, their home – our churches go on to fail these kids and their parents in their time of need.

I have faith – and I have faith in America. That is why I am marching to support President Obama in his goals of creating a more perfect union for all of America - and to support our legislators in passing legislation that will save all of our children from religion-based bigotry.

**BlackCommentator.com** Editorial Board member, the Rev. Irene Monroe, is a

*religion columnist, theologian, and public speaker. A native of Brooklyn, Rev. Monroe is a graduate from Wellesley College and Union Theological Seminary at Columbia University, and served as a pastor at an African-American church before coming to Harvard Divinity School for her doctorate as a Ford Fellow. Reverend Monroe is the author of [Let Your Light Shine Like a Rainbow Always: Meditations on Bible Prayers for Not-So-Everyday Moments](#) . As an African American feminist theologian, she speaks for a sector of society that is frequently invisible. Her website is [irenemonroe.com](http://irenemonroe.com). Click [here](#) to contact the Rev. Monroe.*



Let your voice be heard  
The call is free

Powered By  
Google voice

[Click Here](#)

[Contents of Issue](#)

[Click here](#)

[Home](#)

Click Here To  
CONTRIBUTE TO **bc** NOW

Click Here To  
CONTACT **bc**

Your comments are always welcome.

### **e-Mail re-print notice**

If you send us an e-Mail message we may publish all or part of it, unless you tell us it is not for publication. You may also request that we withhold your name.

Thank you very much for your readership.

Website Design and Hosting provided by



Copyright © 2002-2009  
www.BlackCommentator.com  
All Rights Reserved