



TRUTH in PROGRESS

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 15, 2011

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Fair is Fair Tour explores the intersections between race, sexuality and faith in cities across Montana

ACROSS MONTANA — Can the struggle for gay equality be compared to the black civil rights movement? What are the similarities and differences? And how can people of faith participate in both movements? These are the questions panelists and audience participants will explore during the cross-Montana Fair is Fair Tour in September.

The tour, sponsored by the American Civil Liberties Union of Montana and Truth in Progress, will visit six Montana cities over nine days, including Billings, Bozeman, Missoula, Kalispell, Great Falls and Helena, and feature Rev. Gil Caldwell, an esteemed civil rights activist who started working for equality in the South of the 1960s and has never looked back.

"Most of us have been wounded by others for a variety of reasons. Some persons and some systems have hurt us because of our race, gender, sexual orientation, economic and educational poverty, religion, politics, same sex partnered relationship, physical characteristics, etc," says Caldwell. "I look forward to talking about the 'solidarity of our woundedness' and how we who have been hurt for a multiplicity of reasons, can discover healing for ourselves as we seek to enable the healing of others."

Caldwell, documentarian Marilyn Bennett and ACLU of Montana LGBT Advocacy Coordinator Ninia Baehr, plus special guests in some cities will discuss how communities can support gay and lesbian couples' work for relationship recognition, and how that struggle parallels and differs from the racial justice movement.

"These are different histories. These are very different experiences," says Bennett. "But the fight for civil rights, and acknowledging equal rights have important similarities."

Rev. Caldwell is a retired United Methodist Minister who participated in the "Mississippi Freedom Summer" of 1964, the Selma to Montgomery March in 1965, and the March on Washington. He is a founding member of the United Methodists of Color for a Fully Inclusive Church and the Black Methodists for Church Renewal. Today Rev. Caldwell is exploring how faith communities and all people can support work for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality with Bennett through the [Truth in Progress](#) project.

Baehr is the ACLU of Montana's LGBT Advocacy Coordinator and spearheads the [Fair is Fair](#) project. Through her work she has been reaching out to clergy members who support domestic partnerships for same-sex couples.

"We're happy to be working with churches on this tour," Baehr said. "Nearly 100 clergy members across the state have already stood up for fairness and signed onto a statement supporting justice, compassion and defense of basic human rights for same-sex couples."

All events are free and open to the public.

Billings -- Saturday, Sept. 17

5 p.m.

Grace United Methodist Church, 1935 Avenue B

Bozeman -- Monday, Sept. 19

7 p.m.

Montana State University, SUB 233-235

With special guest, Dr. Walter Fleming, MSU Native American Studies Department Director

Missoula -- Tuesday, Sept. 20

8 p.m.

University Congregational UCC, 405 University Ave.

With special guests, David Herrera and Steven Barrios, board members of the Montana Two-Spirit Society

Kalispell -- Wednesday, Sept. 21

7 p.m.

Christ Church Episcopal, 213 Third Ave. East

Great Falls -- Saturday, Sept. 24

10:30 a.m.

Great Falls Public Library, 301 2nd Ave. N

With special guest Steven Barrios, board member of the Montana Two-Spirit Society

Helena -- Monday, Sept. 26

7 p.m.

St. Paul's United Methodist Church, Corner of Logan and Lawrence

With special guest Jamee Greer of the Montana Human Rights Network, who will discuss work for an LGBT-inclusive non-discrimination ordinance in Helena

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