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## Through Rainbow-Colored Glasses

By Christine Dinsmore

I e-mail George W. Bush almost every day. My message never changes: “For I was hungry and you fed me; I was thirsty and you gave me water; I was a stranger and you invited me into your homes; naked and you clothed me; sick and in prison, and you visited me.” The quote comes from Mathew 25:35-36.

I’m not a religious zealot. In fact, I’m an agnostic on my hopeful days and an atheist all the rest. My new role as a scripture-babbling pen pal is in response to the hypocrisy that exudes from this White House. The compassionate conservative pushed for an end to individual bankruptcy, which most often is caused by unemployment, divorce or medical debt, while leaving loopholes for the rich. He champions permanent tax cuts for the wealthy yet slashes funds for education, welfare and food stamps, his cosmetic gesture for reducing the Brobdingnagian federal deficit.

And I’ve had it with these euphemistic names for legislation, such as No Child Left Behind—except poor children whose schools will always be underfunded. Euphemisms didn’t begin with Bush. Bill Clinton advocated for and signed into law the Personal Responsibility and Work Reconciliation Act—the draconian law that establishes a five-year cap on welfare, enforces below-minimum-wage work in exchange for benefits and keeps poor people, mostly women and children, destitute because it eliminates education exemptions. Welfare recipients either give up school or juggle it with required garbage-pickup jobs in parks. All this without increasing subsidized child care. There is an irony that Clinton promoted a “personal responsibility” act.

Truth be told, we left-leaning folks gave Clinton way too many passes. We’re frequently guilty of not wanting to embarrass or challenge our friends. Too often, the human species suffers from the “If it doesn’t affect me, I won’t pay attention” syndrome. As a straight colleague of mine wrote after the religious right went after our beloved cartoon character, echoing the words of Martin Niemoller, “They came for SpongeBob SquarePants, but I wasn’t a sea urchin living in a pineapple under the sea...”

Bush’s policies crush the lives of poor people around the world. We may think that it’s not our problem, but in today’s global village, a sneeze in Cambodia can reverberate in Kingston. And I’m not talking about the Asian bird flu.

For the fourth consecutive year, Bush has not released the \$34 million that Congress allocated to the United Nations Population Fund. The reason is that he mistakenly attributes support of sex-selective abortions to the UN agency. Bush's supposed pro-life stance will result in 2 million unwanted pregnancies, 800,000 abortions, 4,700 maternal deaths and 77,000 children dying before reaching their fifth birthday, according to the agency.

The LGBT community has had a reputation of failing to work for issues that don't directly affect us (not that straight folks have embraced *our* causes so readily). I think we need to do better in forging coalitions on both the domestic and international fronts.

Here's my plan for May and June. To celebrate Mother's Day, I'm writing a check to the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children to help reduce maternal mortality. For Gay Pride, I'm supporting Louis-Georges Tin, the editor of *Dictionnaire de l'homophobie*, in his efforts to establish an annual World Day Against Homophobia. The petition can be found on the International Lesbian and Gay Association Web site, [www.ilga.org](http://www.ilga.org).

And for Father's Day, I'm sending President Bush a card with a message from Mark 10:25. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." Empty your pockets, George.